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Chairman: Mr. Ali ..... (Malaysia)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Ms. McLurg

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 161: Financing of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
(A/62/781/Add.14 and A/62/791 and Corr.1)

1. **Mr. Sach** (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the budget of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 (A/62/791 and Corr.1), said that the General Assembly, in its resolution 62/232, had appropriated funding of $1,275,653,700 for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008. The proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 amounted to $1,699,710,000, which represented a 33.2 per cent increase over the resources approved for 2007/08. Because UNAMID had not been established until August 2007, the resource requirements for 2007/08 had been intended to provide for a phased deployment of military contingent personnel and United Nations police and civilian personnel. The 2008/09 proposed budget reflected the requirements for a full 12 months.

2. The main causes of the variance were a higher monthly average deployment of military, police and civilian personnel and additional air transportation requirements resulting from intensified military air patrols and cargo and personnel movements. The General Assembly was invited to appropriate $1,699,710,000 to maintain the mission for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 to assess the amount of $141,642,500 for the period from 1 to 31 July 2008 and to assess the amount of $1,558,067,500 at a monthly rate of $141,642,500, should the Security Council decide to continue the mandate of the mission.

3. **Ms. McLurg** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/62/781/Add.14), said that the Advisory Committee recommended appropriation of the full amount requested by the Secretary-General in his proposed budget for UNAMID for 2008/09. However, it also recommended that only 50 per cent of that amount should be assessed to cover the six-month period from 1 July to 31 December 2008. The proposed budget was based on a deployment plan aiming for 80 per cent deployment of the authorized strength of UNAMID by the end of 2008 and full deployment of civilian personnel by June 2009. However, planned deployment depended on a number of factors, including engineering capacity sufficient to build new camps and upgrade existing camps; better movement of goods from Port Sudan to Darfur; and cooperation from the host Government in providing land and water access and in speeding the movement of goods across the Sudan into Darfur.

4. The Advisory Committee had noted that expenditure as at 31 May 2008 had amounted to $732,908,700 against a 2007/08 budget of $1,275,653,700. The projected level of expenditure might not be reached. Furthermore, the proposed budget for 2008/09, having been prepared by the Mission within one month of its establishment, was not based on experience in implementing the previous budget. The Advisory Committee nevertheless recognized that, once the Mission had progressed beyond the start-up phase, expenditure would accelerate and the need for adequate funds would become acute.

5. Accordingly, in order to ensure sufficient funding to support the functioning of the Mission, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly should approve the appropriation of the full proposed amount of $1,699,710,000. Taking into account the uncertainties outlined in its report and given the current pattern of expenditure, the Advisory Committee recommended assessment of 50 per cent of that sum, namely $849,855,000, for the initial six months of the budget period. Of that amount, $141,642,500 would be assessed for the period from 1 to 31 July 2008 and $708,212,500 would be assessed for the period from 1 August to 31 December 2008, should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNAMID.

6 In addition, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Secretary-General should be requested to submit a progress report no later than 30 November 2008 to provide for a revised appropriation and a further assessment, if required. It should give details of the review of the structure of the Mission, address other matters raised by the General Assembly in its resolution 62/232 and indicate any required adjustments to the Joint Mediation Support Team and developments in coordination and collaboration between UNAMID and other missions deployed in the region and the United Nations country team.

7. **Ms. Pataca** (Angola), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said it was regrettable that the largest

of the peacekeeping budgets due for consideration by the Committee had not come before it until some four days before the close of the second part of the resumed sixty-second session. While mindful that UNAMID had a unique, complex mandate aimed at achieving a lasting political solution and sustained security in Darfur and that full deployment had not yet been achieved, the Group remained confident that the Mission would soon be operating at full strength.

8. The Group noted that the Mission must work within frameworks corresponding to the tasks set out in the report of the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the hybrid operation in Darfur (S/2007/307/Rev.1) and reaffirmed by the Security Council in its resolution 1769 (2007). It welcomed the Secretariat's proposal to provide professional development opportunities for national staff and to include them fully in all relevant training programmes, so helping to build capacity in Darfur.

9. Recalling that it had urged the Secretary-General to request the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) audit the use of exceptional financial, recruitment and procurement measures for UNAMID, the Group was pleased to note that OIOS had begun its audit in January 2008 and aimed to complete its work in May 2008 and to report on the results to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.

10. **Mr. Poulin** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that, having strongly supported its predecessor, Australia, Canada and New Zealand were committed to the success of UNAMID and were helping African countries contributing troops and police to deploy robust and self-sustaining contingents for the Mission. While recognizing its many complex logistical, administrative and political challenges, including extreme remoteness, poor communications infrastructure and reluctant cooperation from the host Government, the three delegations were concerned that, 10 months after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1769 (2007), UNAMID appeared no more robust than AMIS, the African Union mission it had absorbed. They called on the Organization to provide strong leadership to address the causes of the delays, and on the host Government to demonstrate its commitment to peace and security in Darfur by cooperating fully with UNAMID.

11. Experience in deploying UNAMID had demonstrated the need for stronger integration. While the initiative of establishing the Darfur integrated operational team had yielded some results, the Under-Secretaries-General for Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support should give the team the requisite power to resolve the numerous obstacles to deployment, and should instruct managers to cooperate with it.

12. While it was understandable that UNAMID, given its scale, should account for the highest peacekeeping budget proposal ever introduced in the Committee, the absence of justification for the operational costs which accounted for half that budget proposal was regrettable. The delegations would seek further details, in informal consultations, on the substantial projected infrastructure costs and on the key assumptions providing the basis for the deployment schedule. Although they wished to see UNAMID fully operational as rapidly as possible, they believed that the current proposed budget relied on over-optimistic deployment assumptions and therefore concurred with the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that only a portion of the resources requested should be assessed and that a progress report reflecting the experience gained in implementation should be submitted and examined at the main part of the sixty-third session of the Assembly.

13. **Mr. Traystman** (United States of America) said that collective efforts to assist the people of Darfur depended on the success of the Darfur peace process and of UNAMID. His delegation remained deeply disappointed at the delays in the deployment of the Mission, and urged the Secretary-General to take action to expedite the arrival of peacekeeping forces.

14. Supporting the resource requests in the proposed budget, his delegation recalled that the United States continued to be the largest single donor of assistance to the Sudan as a whole and to Darfur, and that it regarded its substantial assessment for UNAMID as an essential contribution to reduce violence, provide for the people's humanitarian needs and restore peace. It concurred with the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that Member States should initially be assessed for only half of the projected cost of the Mission, and then consider a progress report to be submitted by 30 November 2008, potentially leading to a revised appropriation and further assessment.

15. **Mr. Abdelmannan** (Sudan) reiterated his delegation's concern at the late issuance of documents, which could not therefore be examined by the Member States with due care. It was particularly troubling that the report of the Advisory Committee on the financing of UNAMID had been issued, in English only, just a few hours prior to the present meeting. Given the importance of the Mission, his delegation had nevertheless agreed to consider the proposed budget.

16. The Sudan welcomed the cooperation of the African Union and the United Nations in deploying the hybrid operation, which had been established to help the Sudanese parties implement the Darfur Peace Agreement. Based on the expectation that sustainable peace would be achieved through negotiation and dialogue, the Sudanese Government had offered — and would continue to offer — all possible support to the Mission. However, the Government's efforts were being undermined by the rebel groups. The international community must respond firmly to the actions of the rebels, to safeguard its resources and the lives of its personnel. The Sudanese people were well prepared to fight the rebels and had recently defeated an attack by the Justice and Equality Movement — which was supported by some Member States — in just a few hours.

17. Effective realization of the Mission's objectives must start with effective planning. The Sudanese Government had noted a high vacancy rate, particularly in respect of temporary national posts. The Mission must examine the causes of such shortfalls and apply lessons learned instead of offering illogical justifications. The Sudan would address that issue during informal consultations.

18. Regarding national United Nations Volunteers, the Secretariat had failed to reassess the situation, simply repeating its previous assertion that the low number of such volunteers proposed in the budget was the result of the difficulty experienced by the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) in attracting them. It was important to bear in mind that UNAMID was a separate mission and that the experience with UNMIS was not necessarily relevant.

19. In its resolution 62/232, the General Assembly had recommended procurement within the region to supply the needs of peacekeeping missions. Noting that the Secretary-General's report had not addressed that issue, the Sudanese Government requested a detailed explanation of what share of total purchases made during the previous period had been local purchases.

20. Although the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for UNAMID (A/62/791) had not mentioned any lack of cooperation on the part of the Government of Sudan, certain partners remained unwilling to meet the Mission's most basic needs. Despite various appeals from the Secretary-General, Member States had taken months to reach a decision on the provision of helicopters. Similarly, the Sudanese Government had waited three months for the United Nations to sign the status-of-forces agreement (SOFA). In conclusion, the shortcomings of the operation were well known to all. The Sudanese would cooperate fully with all parties during the informal consultations to address those shortcomings and establish a budget that was commensurate with UNAMID's important role.

21. **Mr. Yamada** (Japan) said that the Committee should ensure that all peacekeeping operations established by Security Council mandate were implemented effectively, while also striving to enhance budgetary discipline, accountability and transparency.

22. In the view of his delegation, before embarking on the approach recommended by the Advisory Committee, namely approving the entire proposed UNAMID appropriation, but only assessing part of that amount, in order to leave open the possibility of revision, the General Assembly should perhaps consider the option of adjusting the level of assessments on the basis of updated information regarding the deployment of military and police personnel. That might in turn affect both the deployment of civilian personnel and operational costs, leading to lower expenditure.

23. Believing that a reduction of 30 per cent was realistic in the light of the current situation, his delegation wished the Secretary-General to provide the latest information on force generation and on preparations for deployment, based on the progress made in implementing Security Council resolution 1769 (2007).

Other matters

24. **Mr. Abelian** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management had been notified of the request made at the Committee's 45th meeting by the representative of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the

European Union, for an explanation of the failure to issue in a timely manner and in all languages the report of the Advisory Committee on the financing of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (issued subsequently as document A/62/781/Add.13).

25. On 22 April 2008, the Chairman of the Fifth Committee had written to the Under-Secretaries-General for Management, Field Support and General Assembly and Conference Management, as well as to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, regarding the lack of availability of documents for the second part of the resumed sixty-second session of the General Assembly. The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, while attributing the delay to the late arrival, and in some cases also the excessive length, of peacekeeping budget documents, had emphasized his Department's commitment to the timely issuance of reports.

26. The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management had indicated that his Department had been doing its utmost to mitigate the considerable impact of late arrival of documents, through close coordination with the Fifth Committee and the Secretariat of the Advisory Committee, in order to adjust document processing schedules when feasible. However, the late issuance or even non-availability of documents had forced the Fifth Committee to consider postponing by one week the second part of the resumed session and to constantly revise its programme of work. That had in turn affected the processing schedules of the Department.

27. In addition, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management had worked closely with the Department of Management, as an author department, and with the secretariat of the Fifth Committee, to find more effective solutions to the problem. The Secretary-General was committed to the issuance of all documents in all official languages, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

28. With regard to the chronology of recent events, on Thursday, 29 May 2008, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management had received 87 pages of text from the Advisory Committee for processing in three working days. On the same day, the secretariat of the Fifth Committee had informed the Department that the Bureau of that Committee had decided to consider the 16-page report of the Advisory Committee on the financing of the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi in English only, on the basis of an advance, unedited text, and requested the Department's assistance to print and distribute to the Committee 200 copies of that report.

29. Subsequently, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management had received for processing the 16-page report of the Advisory Committee on the financing of UNOCI; the 18-page report of the Advisory Committee on the financing of UNAMID; and the 6-page report of the Advisory Committee on contingent-owned equipment. Having spoken to representatives of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management on Friday, 29 May 2008, he had been assured that the Advisory Committee reports regarding UNOCI and the United Nations Logistics Base would be issued on Tuesday, 3 June 2008 the day of the current meeting, and had relayed that information to the Bureau of the Fifth Committee.

30. The Bureau had updated the Fifth Committee's programme of work following the 44th meeting of the Committee, pointing out that the report on the financing of UNOCI would not be available in all the official languages by the 45th meeting on Monday, 2 June 2008, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management having made no commitment to make it available by that date. The Advisory Committee reports on the financing of UNOCI and on the United Nations Logistics Base had been issued in all the official languages on the day of the current meeting, as expected, as documents A/62/781/Add.13 and A/62/781/Add.12.

31. The Department for General Assembly and Conference Management had received the report of the Advisory Committee on the financing of UNAMID at 10 p.m. on Friday, 30 May, 2008. It too had been issued in all the official languages on the day of the current meeting, as document A/62/781/Add.14. The three reports regarding contingent-owned equipment, totalling 345 pages, would be issued on Wednesday, 4 June 2008, at 6 a.m.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.